

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A distance education system for providing an educational service to a user via a network, comprising:

education providing means for providing the educational service utilizing at least one educational material to the user via the network, wherein the educational material includes a plurality of elements;

test transmission means for transmitting a test to the user ~~by each~~ at a predetermined stage and for prompting the user to send an answer to the test, wherein said test is associated with said educational material;

evaluation means for receiving the answer from the user via the network to ~~evaluate it~~ the answer; ~~and~~

evaluation transmission means for transmitting the evaluation result by the evaluation means to the ~~user~~ user;

an educational support member database in which is recorded educational support members, specialization areas of respective educational support members, and contact addresses of respective educational support members;

support member selection means for receiving a support request from the user via the network and for selecting at least one educational support member who has a specialization field coinciding with a specialization field of said support request received from the user via the network or a specialization field in which the educational service is provided to the user from said educational support member database;

connection agent means for mediating a connection between said contact address of the selected educational support member and said user via the network and for

communicating at least one piece of information from audio information, image information, and text information between the selected educational support member and the user; and

register means for registering status of the educational support members to the educational support member database, in which each support member is ready to respond to the support request,

wherein said support selection means, when an educational support member is to be selected, selects the educational support member who has a status in which the member can readily respond.

2. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising:

educational material optimizing means for selecting at least one element from ~~a~~an educational material database based upon the evaluation result by the evaluation means with reference to predetermined selection criteria; and

educational material dynamic changing means for dynamically changing a part of said educational material using said selected at least one element, wherein the part corresponds to the selected element and is not yet taken by the user.

3. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising means for transmitting a pre-test prior to transmitting the educational material and for prompting the user to send an answer to the pre-test,

wherein said evaluation means further receives the answer to the pre-test to evaluate ~~it~~the answer,

and wherein said educational material optimizing means selects the educational material including a plurality of elements from the pre-established educational material database based upon the evaluation result of the pre-test with reference to said predetermined selection criteria.

4. (Original) The system according to claim 3, wherein said optimizing means selects the educational material from the pre-established educational material database based upon at least one of: the evaluation result of the answer to the pre-test; a request of the user; a history of taking lectures of the user; and past evaluation result of the user.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising:  
~~an educational support member database, in which educational support members, specializations areas of the respective educational support members, and contact addresses of respective educational support members are recorded therein;~~

~~support member selection means for receiving support request form the user via the network and for selecting at least one educational support member who has a specialization field coinciding with a specialization fields of said support request received from the user via the network or a specialization field in which the educational service is provided to the user from said educational support member database;~~

~~support request transmission means for transmitting said support request to the contact address of the selected educational support member via the network and for prompting the educational support member to reply it; and~~

~~user support means for receiving the reply of the support request from the selected educational support member via the network and for forwarding it the reply to the corresponding user via the network.~~

7-8. (Canceled)